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EDITORIAL STAFF MONTHLY BULLETIN

F. E. Davidson
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A NEGLIGIBLE OPPORTUNITY

Where extensive alterations to existing buildings are necessary in connection with street widening projects, and where the city itself pays for the alterations, an architect's commission could very easily create a beautiful street, entailing no extra outlay of money so far as the property owners are concerned.

One needs but to make a casual survey of the alterations which have been completed on North LaSalle Street to get the point of this suggestion.

The Editor will wager a year's subscription to the Bulletin that any observing citizen can at first glance designate the new building fronts that were designed and supervised by architects. Obviously, most of the alterations were completed by contractors without any architectural guidance.

What a pity that the rehabilitation now looks like an overgrown main street in a small town and not what it might have been had all of the alteration work been completed under the professional guidance of an architectural commission.

Records of the construction industry since January 1st indicate that the Editor's leading article in our January last issue was somewhat too optimistic.

In the Chicago territory it is estimated that approximately 70% of all new construction started since January 1st last has been construction that was forced by the various street widening projects and a major part of the balance was financed by various public utility corporations, including the railroads.

Building costs today are lower than at any time since before the World War and any owner requiring new construction should as a matter of business take advantage of existing conditions. Commodity prices as a whole have been greatly reduced during the past nine months—in fact the purchasing power of the dollar today is over 10%

greater than it was one year ago, and if our leading authorities are correct in their statements that the business curve has started on the upgrade, commodity prices in general may be expected to enhance somewhat.

The greatest detriment to the resumption of building activity is the scarcity of money available for financing. This condition has been brought about by the utter recklessness of loan bankers and those who in the past have financed new construction, who, if the commission was large enough, were willing to make loans for any amount. Now that the interest and principal has been defaulted on so many hundreds of large projects, those investing in real estate mortgages and real estate bonds are out of the market for this class of securities, and the bankers themselves are alleged to be loaded up with a vast amount of this class of securities. Had the bankers themselves been half as shrewd business men as their profession would justify those on the outside in assuming, this condition would not have been brought about and we would not have had the general slump in construction that has been evidenced in the past few months.

One lesson of the utter collapse of the real estate bond mortgage market may safely be stated; "that the banking interests have at last discovered that the bond-holders are supposed to have some rights and that their interests must be safeguarded at all hazard, if there is to be a general resumption of construction activity."

It is the Editor's belief that the general shut-down of construction has been brought about to a very large extent by the timidity of our bankers. Of course, every business man consults his banker and when bankers unanimously advise against proceeding with any construction, the effect soon becomes noticeable.

If the bankers of America have any faith in the future of our nation, let them urge upon their clients the wisdom of proceeding with needed construction now, and if all bankers would unite in giving this kind of advice to their customers, the effect would soon become apparent, and it would hasten the time when the industry would begin functioning somewhat nearer to normal, but so long as there is such an utter scarcity of money available for building loans and when almost every banker is still advising his clients against proceeding with construction, what else can be expected than the conditions that now prevail?

AN IMPORTANT MEETING

The members of the Illinois Society of Architects and of the Architects Club of Chicago were the guests of the Chicago Chapter, A. I. A., at their regular meeting held in the club rooms of the Architects Club of Chicago on the evening of October 14.

The speakers of the evening were Mr. Frederick W. Garber of Cincinnati, Regional Director, Great Lakes Division, A. I. A., Mr. Ernest J. Russell of St. Louis, Vice-President of the A. I. A., and Mr. Robert D. Kohn of New York City, President, American Institute of Architects and President New York Building Congress.

Mr. Robert D. Kohn in his address told of the formation of the New York Building Congress and explained in some detail its organization, aims and accomplishments, calling particular attention to the fact that the building industry of the United States, the second largest industry, was in a most chaotic condition due to an utter lack of any national organization comprising all elements entering into the industry.

Mr. Howard L. Cheney, President of the Chicago Chapter, was instructed by the meeting to appoint a committee to study the feasibility of organizing a Chicago Building Congress to function along the same line as the New York Building Congress and the building congresses that have been formed in many of the other large industrial centers of the United States.

SHREWD INVESTORS

Many shrewd investors are now instructing their architects to at once rush through to completion plans and specifications for all of the buildings that their expansion programs will require for the next three or four years, figuring that the probable saving in the actual cost will justify proceeding with construction work now even if the building is not required for a period of two or three years.

Last evening at the meeting of the Chicago Chapter, Robert D. Kohn, President of the American Institute of Architects, stated that in New York City building costs were today 15% lower than they were one year ago and that many of the large architects offices were proceeding on instructions from their clients to develop plans and specifications for buildings that will not be needed for the next two or three years, owners figuring that even considering carrying charges on vacant buildings that the saving in construction costs would justify their proceeding at this time.

Mr. Garber of Cincinnati mentioned a number of similar instances in Cincinnati.

Building construction must and will be proceeded with and the owner who starts now will not only have his choice of contractors but will be able to secure the best craftsmen and building mechanics in all branches of work and will be able to secure his building at a much lower cost than it will be possible when everybody is busy.

AN INVITATION

Members of the Architects Club of Chicago are privileged to attend any of the following meetings of the Illinois Society of Architects:

November 25, 1930
January 27, 1931
March 24, 1931
May 26, 1931

The Editor is advised that officials of the Chicago Chapter, American Institute of Architects, will extend a similar invitation to members of the Architects Club of Chicago to attend the regular monthly meetings of the Chapter on

October 14, 1930
December 9, 1930
February 10, 1931
April 14, 1931

It is to be hoped that members of the club will avail themselves of the privilege of attending the regular meetings of the architectural Societies.

Those availing themselves of this privilege are earnestly requested to notify Mr. H. L. Palmer, Central 4214, of their intention to attend the various meetings of the Society and to in a like manner notify Mr. Carl E. Heimbrodt, Secretary of the Chicago Chapter, State 8887, of their intent to attend the meetings of the Chapter in order that places may be provided at the dinner for those who attend.

THE INQUIRING EDITOR

The following inquiry was sent to four members of the Illinois Society of Architects:

"Are the Journeymen Plumbers in requiring drains for small individual refrigerating units justified where the units are not equipped with drains or is it a wasteful ruling that has all the ear-marks of racketeering?" and in reply the Editor has received the following communications:

October 7, 1930.

My dear Inquiring Editor:—

Let me answer your inquiry of October 1st, by first quoting from my own specifications.

"REFRIGERATOR DRAINS."

"The refrigerators in this building are small individual units which are not equipped with drains. The architect is aware of the arbitrary Union ruling requiring drains for all refrigerating units. If the plumbing contractor is compelled to install drains, said drains must be capped top and bottom as said drains are entirely superfluous. Contractor shall also seal the sewer opening in the basement. The above work, if installed, to be done at the contractor's own expense."

This Union ruling was first conceived about three and a half years ago. Many thousands of dollars have unnecessarily been wasted, which in turn reflects directly in higher cost of construction and higher rents.

It is about time that the architectural profession as a whole condemn this wasteful practice.

Our antiquated ordinance does not even call for drains for ice boxes but only outlines the proper installation of same if installed.

Respectfully yours,

ROB'T. C. OSTERGREN.

* * *

October 9, 1930.

Dear Mr. Editor:

Replying to your question of October 1st, I may say, it is a fact that either the Journeymen Plumbers or the Plumbing Contractors, or both, are forcing owners to pay for putting refrigerator drains into apartment buildings even when they do not want them or have no use for them. In some instances that I know of this has been done against the owner's protest in terms as strong as he could make, to the effect that such pipes are a detriment to the building.

I presume this is practised universally throughout the city. It is a great injustice perpetrated upon the owners by one or both of the above organizations through a substantial threat of labor trouble and consequent fear on the part of the owner of further and greater loss if he does not comply.

Such practice, to say the least, is not cognate with American fundamental law, and should not be allowed by law enforcing bodies. Any informed person will agree that empty pipes thus installed under and between refrigerators are a suitable and inviting place for the harboring of vermin, an undesirable communication from apartment to apartment, and therefore, a detriment to a good apartment building equipped with modern, iceless refrigeration.

The damage to the people is three-fold; One: making them pay a useless cost; Two: pay more rent indefinitely thereafter; and Three: making the homes less sanitary than they otherwise would be.

Yours very truly,

HENRY K. HOLSMAN.

* * *

October 10, 1930.

Dear Inquiring Editor:

Your question as stated in your letter of October 2, 1930, is really not a question, but rather a statement of fact, in full.

We observe in a recent booklet, forwarded to each Builder and Architect in Chicago, by The Chicago Journeymen Plumbers P. and B., Association, that they define themselves as "Workmen skilled in the trade of putting into buildings the tanks, pipes, traps, fittings and fixtures for conveying water, gas and sewage" and we accept this definition, maintaining however, that Journeymen Plumbers are not qualified to determine the sanitary requirements of a building.

It is our opinion that any ruling by a Labor Organization, establishing standards of materials or scope of work, verges perilously on racketeering.

Yours very truly,

H. E. THON.
THIELBAR AND FUGARD,
Architects.

* * *

October 10, 1930.

My dear Mr. Editor:

In answer to your question, regarding the Journeymen Plumbers requiring drains for small individual refrigerating units, compelling the property owners to install those drains or work will be stopped. This is a non-just and wasteful ruling in order to compel the owner to spend more money, as the building cost now, especially the plumbing, is too high for the income, and furthermore those plumbing stacks and drains are not used and are unsanitary and should be capped at top and bottom in all these apartments. All the apartments which have individual mechanical refrigeration as all these refrigerators are built and delivered from the factory with defrosting trays, and therefore no plumbing drains are required and only a waste of money.

If the architect's now don't specify those drains the plumbing contractor tells him that they must be installed under all circumstances at the request of the Journeymen's plumbers or they will be fined, but after they are installed and paid for the owner should destroy them as they are of no use to him only an unnecessary expense and unsanitary.

Very truly yours,

JOHN MALLINGER,
Architect.

"Not being statisticians, systematizers or reformers there are some questions which a few of us cannot understand. Take the business depression as an example which in similar sense means old fashioned "hard times" with its companion, unemployment. Here's a question that has agitated the country for a year, and particularly editorial writers and authorities on economics. Times would be hard, indeed, if the commercial and industrial world accepted as true the solutions given and the cures prescribed. Hard times would yield to "Mixed times" from which the patients might never recover.

Business may be quiet and there may be unemployment but who could tell it from external evidence.

Movie pictures still draw packed houses.

Automobiles are owned by one out of every four of our 122,698,190 persons in the United States.

Every golf link in the country is crowded. Those who cannot afford country club memberships have money to pay for playing on public links.

Augmenting this comes the Tom Thumb or miniature course occupying every available lot in any country town of 1200 to every city in the country. They have sprung up by the thousands and day and night are thronged with players, young and old.

More Americans have gone to Europe this year than in the history of the world.

More people are scurrying through the country in automobiles than ever before.

Bathing beaches are crowded and resorts never want for patrons.

The sounds of the radio are heard daily and nightly in nearly every home and so on ad infinitum.

None of these things which tickle our fancy or gratify our insatiate desire for pleasure point to a business depression or "hard times" or unemployment. They do point, to the writer at least, that too many hundreds of thousands of Americans are giving more thought and energy to play and pleasure than to the serious work of business, industry and thrift.

Perhaps this has something to do with the so-called business depression."—The Mueller Record.

AN INTERESTING COMPETITION

Past President Albert Moore Saxe is the Professional Adviser for an interesting competition sponsored by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Works.

The officers of the Chicago Bridge & Iron Works, builders of Elevated Steel Water Tanks, are of the opinion that a considerable improvement could be made in the appearance of elevated steel tanks and their supporting structures. In their opinion no serious thought nor effort is being given to the aesthetic possibilities of these very necessary parts of our civic and industrial water supply. They believe that there are attractive architectural possibilities to be found in the natural characteristics of these structures. They have, therefore, undertaken to sponsor a competition in the hope of securing designs for a typical tank and tower from which may be developed types which will express pleasing aesthetic qualities. They offer the following prizes for the eight most interest solutions:

1st Prize	\$2,000.00
2nd Prize	1,000.00
3rd Prize	500.00
and Five Honorable Mention Prizes of \$100.00 each.	

Participation in the competition is open to all architects, engineers and draughtsmen of the world, who shall have made application to the professional adviser, by mail, on or before December 1, 1930. A list of the names of all those admitted to the competition will be mailed to each of the competitors on or before January 1, 1931. No competitor shall submit more than one design.

The sponsor has appointed a jury of award consisting of Mr. Howard Cheney, President of the Chicago Chapter of the A. I. A., Mr. R. W. Zimmerman, Architect, of Chicago, and Mr. George T. Horton of the Chicago Bridge & Iron Works.

STATE INSPECTOR COGSHALL IS ON THE JOB

In a formal report to the Public Action Committee of the Illinois Society of Architects, Mr. Alexander H. Marshall, Attorney for the Society, called specific attention to the wonderful work being done by State Inspector Cogshall representing the Department of Registration and Education.

Mr. Marshall states that State Inspector Cogshall is deter-

mined to "stand pat" and to continue to prosecute relentlessly each and every violation of the law which may be brought to his attention and suggests that this is an attitude which should certainly commend itself to all registered architects.

Mr. Charles Krutckoff, Chairman Cook County Board of Assessors, has requested that we publish the following statement relative to the issuing of building permits:

"Section 27 of the Zoning Ordinance requires each applicant for a building permit in the City of Chicago to file a plat plan showing outside dimensions and other pertinent information concerning the proposed building on Board of Assessors form 'B.'"

"By complying with these instructions at the time you apply for permits you will expedite the issuance of your permit and aid the Board of Assessors in maintaining a perpetual inventory of real estate improvements in Chicago.

"A representative of the valuation staff of the Board of Assessors is stationed in the City Building Department. He will supply you with forms as needed and answer any questions you may wish to ask concerning their use. His telephone address is Randolph 8000, Local 92."

COOK COUNTY BOARD OF ASSESSORS.

CORRESPONDENCE

October 1, 1930.

Illinois Society of Architects,
Gentlemen:

In the August-September issue of your Monthly Bulletin, reference is made to a postal card sent out by The Lord & Bushnell Company, with an editorial comment that perhaps friend Claney refers to private rather than professional plans.

May we take the liberty of replying for Mr. Claney, because the Chicago Lumber Institute is indirectly responsible for the statement and sponsors the service mentioned.

There is no intention to limit this service to "private plans." Professional plans are included, and, in fact, are considered more important. Buildings erected under architectural or engineering supervision reflect a desire on the part of the owners to secure substantial construction. In such instances, we will spare no effort to insure satisfaction in the use of lumber.

The lumber industry has made forward strides rather rapidly in the past few years. Frequent changes in grading and grade nomenclature have been confusing even to lumbermen. Professional men have found it impossible to be up to date in lumber specifications without a tremendous amount of study. It is the purpose of the Chicago Lumber Institute to provide the latest specifications that will give the architect or engineer what he has in mind rather than dictate what he should have.

We volunteer no information, we make no unsolicited suggestions, we provide no architectural service, but we do provide authentic and practical information whenever requested to do so. We provide a display room where professional men may personally examine all species of woods in all grades. Here they may make their own comparisons, or we will assist them as they wish.

Architects and engineers who have requested our service, or used our display room have apparently been very much pleased. We have been encouraged to believe we are providing something that is wanted and needed, and so we shall continue.

We are quite confident that if the writer of the editorial comment referred to in the opening paragraph of this letter, would discover what Mr. Claney was talking about he would page his professional brothers much louder and tell them more about it.

Very truly yours,

CHICAGO LUMBER INSTITUTE,

By L. Kraemer, Engineer in Forest Products.

October 8, 1930.

Mr. Robert C. Ostergren,
President, Illinois Society of Architects.
Dear Sir:

The practice, by applicants for building permits, of furnishing to the Department of Health fictitious names and addresses of property owners, in connection with plan examinations, has resulted very unsatisfactorily. This practice caused considerable confusion and embarrassment to both

our office and field forces. A change of procedure in this connection therefore is advisable.

It is my intention to place in effect at an early date an order requiring that the owner's full name and correct address be shown on every plan submitted for approval.

In this effort to remedy conditions I should like to enlist your cooperation as well as that of the members of your organization.

An expression of your willingness to acquaint your members with the provisions of the contemplated order, when it is promulgated, will be greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,

ARNOLD H. KEGEL,
Commissioner of Health.

In acknowledgment President Ostergren wrote:

* * * *

October 9, 1930.

Arnold H. Kegel, M. D.,
Commissioner of Health,
City of Chicago.

My dear Doctor Kegel:

I am in receipt of your letter of October 8th, pertaining to fictitious names and addresses of property owners that are sometimes given on applications for permits in your department.

The Board of Directors of the Illinois Society of Architects will meet Tuesday, October 4th. Please be assured that I will at that time read your communication.

I personally believe all communications whether from the Health Department or the Building Department should at all times be addressed to the architect in charge of the work.

You will hear from me again on this subject after Board meeting referred to above.

Very truly yours,

ROBERT C. OSTERGREN,
President.

* * * *

The above correspondence was read at the regular October meeting of the Board of Directors and President Ostergren was instructed to officially advise Dr. Kegel that the Society endorsed the stand taken by the Department of Health, with the suggestion that the architect in every case should receive a copy of the notice issued by the Department of Health in all cases where any violation of the laws or rules of the Department were discovered.

THUMB NAIL SKETCHES

"A hungry man doesn't get much pleasure out of art."

* * *

"When we think let us think constructively, particularly when we think about ourselves."

* * *

"Most of us talk, not because we have anything to say, but because silence is embarrassing."

* * *

"Most of us get as many good breaks as bad ones, but we forget all about the good ones."

* * *

"Wouldn't it be great if men would study, train, and practice to improve themselves in business as they do in golf?"

* * *

"Nothing is so disastrous to liberty as a successful revolution," says Will Durant. "The greatest tragedy that can befall an ideal is its fulfillment."

* * *

"Examinations of bank balances, savings accounts and other repositories of the country's wealth disclose that there is more money available per person than ever before. The buyer merely is afraid and is hoarding his money against a rainy day that need not arrive if only he will blast the clouds with a spray of gold."

* * *

"In June, this year, the purchasing power of a dollar was ten per cent higher than at the corresponding time one year ago, the United States Department of Labor has announced. Price decreases have occurred in major groups of commodities, ranging from 0.5 per cent in house furnishing goods to nearly 14 per cent in farm products."

* * *

"Life is an interesting novel. In the eyes of one capable of thinking in terms of the universe, the men and women who people our earth are of no more importance than are

characters in one of the current best sellers that will be forgotten two years from now. But that does not prevent them from being interesting. It does not keep them from doing interesting and colorful and surprising things. One should permit oneself to be entertained by them, but one should not make the mistake of taking either them or oneself too seriously. Life on this planet is so short that one ought to crowd it with enjoyment, with laughter, with jokes with a devil-may-care manner that characterizes true youthfulness.

* * *

"That current real estate prices are likely to be lower than the normal value of the properties is implied by figures compiled by the statistical department of the Alexander Hamilton Institute. These show that rentals, as the result of an almost continuous six-year decline, are back practically to the point from which they advanced in 1920. At the same time, the cost of building has receded much less, so that many structures are bringing a return at the present time that would not justify their current cost of reproduction. In consequence, new building financing has been at low ebb. Analysis by a real estate securities house shows that total real estate financing in 1930, in stocks, bonds and notes combined, will be the lowest since 1922."

Any member of the Illinois Society of Architects having experience in the promotion of building enterprises and who may be interested in becoming affiliated with a leading firm of general contractors in London, England, who have in contemplation the erection of a considerable number of inexpensive apartment buildings in and around London, are advised to get in touch with President Ostergren.

IMPORTANT MERGER IS ANNOUNCED

"An announcement of much interest to those in Chicago's construction business tells of the formation of the Moulding-Brownell Corporation, a \$10,000,000 concern, to take over the businesses and assets of a group of Chicago and mid-western companies engaged in the building material and coal field. Included in the group are the Thomas Moulding Brick Company, Brownell Improvement Co., Federal Stone Company, Superior Stone Company, Wisconsin-Wilcox Company, and American Sand and Gravel Company. The company will have properties in four states, having facilities for producing annually upwards of 6,500,000 tons of materials. It will have an extensive wholesale and retail organization and eleven retail distributing plants in the Chicago metropolitan area. This company will be one of the largest organizations in the country engaged in the production and distribution of building materials."

TO PROVIDE ARCHITECTS WITH APPROVED LISTS

"Of interest to builders is the following announcement just made by E. E. Hively, executive secretary of the Material Dealers Credit Bureau:

"The Credit Committee of this Bureau has adopted a plan which should produce some results among the contractors who are hovering close to the line which separates good contractors from the bad ones. Architects in letting contracts are swamped with bids. Every sub-contract has from twenty-five to fifty bidders and most of the bids are from undesirable contractors. The architects have no way of separating the sheep from the goats and usually the contract is awarded to the lowest bidder, regardless of his standing in the industry. This bureau will furnish lists of desirable contractors to the architects so that the architect will have some guide to go by in giving out plans. In order for a contractor to get on the list, he must have a satisfactory financial statement on file in this office and his credit record must be clear. No contractor will be listed if he owes a delinquent account to any of our members. This plan along with our plan of 'bearing down' on the delinquents should produce some rather gratifying results."

IN MEMORIAM

H. H. Richards
Sept. 18, 1930